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New York

President: Mr. Eliasson ..... (Sweden)

The meeting was called to order at 2.40 p.m.

Agenda item 84 (continued)

Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency

Note by the Secretary-General (A/60/204)

Draft resolution (A/60/L.13)

Mr. Ng (Singapore): My delegation would like to congratulate the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, and the IAEA itself on being jointly awarded this year's Nobel Peace Prize. This award is both well deserved and timely. It reflects the important role the IAEA plays in nuclear non-proliferation.

With the increasing challenges posed by nuclear proliferation, coupled with the rise of nuclear power as an energy source, strict conformity to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and to the Agency's safeguards obligations are crucial. As a member of the IAEA Board of Governors, Singapore will continue to lend its full support to the Agency and its work.

Over the past few years, the NPT has faced serious challenges. This fact has emphasized the need for the Treaty to be underpinned by a strong safeguards regime. There is now significant potential for nuclear proliferation, given the discovery of a sophisticated and clandestine nuclear procurement network, the spread of nuclear knowledge, access to sensitive technology and the complications that can arise from the peaceful use of nuclear energy. While the IAEA protects the right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, it must also ensure that such a right is exercised in compliance with States' non-proliferation obligations under article II of the NPT and the full implementation of IAEA safeguards, and with the utmost transparency.

The IAEA has a central role in combating nuclear proliferation. It is therefore vital that its safeguards regime remains capable of responding to new challenges within its mandate. In this context, Singapore supports the several key initiatives taken recently by the IAEA Board of Governors. They include the creation of an advisory committee of the Board on safeguards and verification, establishing the Additional Protocol as the new standard for safeguards verification, and ushering in a modified version of the Small Quantities Protocol.

As a reflection of our strong commitment to non-proliferation, Singapore signed the Additional Protocol on 22 September 2005. In our view, States themselves must also enhance and continue to enhance international cooperation to counter nuclear proliferation. In this regard, Singapore supports the full and effective implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) which, inter alia, calls on United Nations Member States to enhance domestic controls and step up cooperation against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. While legally binding multilateralism should be the basis of

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the global non-proliferation regime, other multi-country initiatives, such as the Proliferation Security Initiative, are important elements in international counter-proliferation efforts.

I would like next to touch upon the rise of nuclear energy as an energy option. There is a clear trend towards the use of nuclear power in the developing world, particularly in Asia, as our energy needs increase. Effective nuclear safety and security regimes must therefore be strongly emphasized. Singapore strongly commends and endorses the Agency's efforts to promote adherence to IAEA safety standards and guidelines. We urge member States to make effective use of the Agency's safety review services and other forms of assistance to raise nuclear safety standards and uphold an effective nuclear safety culture. It is incumbent upon States to establish regulatory infrastructures that will support credible national nuclear safety regimes.

While ensuring nuclear safety ultimately remains the national responsibility of States, the cross-border implications of radiological fallout make nuclear safety very much a transnational concern. Nuclear safety and security are closely interrelated. In this regard, Singapore places a high degree of importance on continued measures by the IAEA to improve nuclear security and protection against nuclear and radiological terrorism. We welcome the IAEA Board's adoption in September of a Nuclear Security Plan for 2006 to 2009. The importance of transboundary emergency preparedness capability, including appropriate regional cooperation, could not be emphasized more.

Singapore is also pleased to note that the Agency's Technical Cooperation Programme has expanded and improved its management and delivery of technical assistance projects. The needs-driven approach adopted by the Agency together with member States targets the particular concerns identified by member States, while optimizing the Agency's financial resources.

Singapore firmly supports the Agency's technical cooperation activities. In recognition of this, we have consistently contributed our full assessed share of the IAEA's Technical Cooperation Fund. The IAEA Board of Governors recently agreed in broad terms that the prize money awarded to the IAEA for the 2005 Nobel Peace Prize should be used to fund the needs of developing countries in the peaceful application of nuclear energy. We fully support that decision. Singapore looks forward to further cooperation with the Agency in bilateral technical cooperation initiatives.

Singapore will continue to support the work of the Director General and the Agency in all its three pillars of promoting nuclear safety and security, peaceful applications of nuclear science and technology, and nuclear verification and safeguards.

Mr. Sumaida'ie (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to express our appreciation to the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, for his presentation of the annual report of the Agency to the General Assembly. We extend our congratulations to him and to the Agency on their earning the Nobel Peace Prize through the actions they have undertaken to spare humanity from the disasters that could be caused by the use of weapons of mass destruction. The IAEA's activities contribute to the establishment of peace in the world and help secure the benefits of sharing nuclear technology internationally to achieve socio-economic development.

Cognizant of the important role that the Agency plays, my Government realizes that it must have the funds necessary to support its technical programmes and activities through payment by States of their assessments to the budget. Based on this, my Government has requested the Secretariat to transfer Iraq's arrears to the IAEA's fund for the period 1991 to 2005 from our money that was deposited with the United Nations. This initiative is the result of my Government's interest in creating an effective and supportive role for the activities of the IAEA.

This is the first occasion on which my delegation has taken the floor in the General Assembly to speak on this item since the collapse of the previous Iraqi regime, whose relationship with the IAEA was often characterized by an absence of understanding and by tension. I can state with confidence that a new era has begun in the relationship between my Government and the IAEA, one based on full cooperation, transparency and respect by Iraq for the commitments that it has entered into under international conventions and treaties relating to disarmament and non-proliferation.

We have taken a number of new measures that reflect our new attitude. We have established a commission to control radioactive materials, which is

based on the IAEA's guiding principles and code of conduct. The Commission began work this year on a comprehensive action plan to control stocks of depleted radioactive sources, bury low-grade radioactive waste and tighten border controls in conjunction with competent Iraqi authorities. An institution dedicated to banning the spread of weapons has been established, as has, in the Ministry of the Environment, a centre for radiation protection, which monitors the movement and use of radioactive sources, including their import, export, transfer, purchase, sale stockpiling and circulation. The national control service, in the Ministry of Science and Technology, is implementing a continuous monitoring, verification and inspection plan for controlling materials and equipment of dual usage.

Working with the committee on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and disarmament bodies, our National Security Council is implementing Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), and we are submitting reports in that regard.

We are considering accession to these international conventions and treaties to which we are not yet party. During the Conference to Facilitate the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, held in September, we expressed our intention to accede to that Convention.

The National Assembly has added to those measures by incorporating a number of basic principles into the constitution, which was approved on 15 October. The first paragraph states that the Iraqi Government respects and will abide by its international commitments to ban the proliferation, development, production and use of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. It will also ban the development, production and manufacture of any related equipment, materials, technology and delivery systems.

During the past two years we have succeeded in charting a course for the Iraq of the future by undertaking a number of projects that reject the previous regime's attitude towards weapons of mass destruction, based on the IAEA's conclusions that Iraq is free from nuclear weapons. Those conclusions have been supported by reports from survey teams indicating that Iraq is free from weapons of mass destruction. We have begun consultations and coordination with members of the Security Council to remove the sanctions imposed by the Council on the previous regime, as set out in the report under the heading of verification in Iraq pursuant to Security Council resolutions.

We would like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation for the efforts of the IAEA to conduct its active annual verification of nuclear stocks in Iraq that are subject to the comprehensive safeguards regime. An Agency delegation conducted a verification exercise in September. We also commend the efforts made by the IAEA's Marine Environment Laboratory concerning the contamination resulting from ship wreckage in the Arab Gulf close to the port city of Um Qasr.

The spectre of nuclear terrorism threatens international peace and security. We must remain cautious and make a collective effort to prevent terrorists and non-State actors from acquiring and using nuclear weapons with a view to achieving their goals. My Government has taken the necessary measures to prevent such threats, in accordance with international law and relevant instruments, including Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). In this connection, we support the measures taken by the IAEA in fostering nuclear security and in providing technical support and assistance to Member States.

My Government is of the view that the nuclear-weapon States must implement their commitments under article VI of the NPT so that complete nuclear disarmament can be achieved.

We stress the need to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, as well as necessary and effective machinery to ensure that Israel accedes to the NPT and places its nuclear facilities under the comprehensive safeguards regime of the IAEA. We urge the international community to arrive at a legally binding international instrument that includes negative and positive safeguards and protects the non-nuclear-weapon States from the threat or use of such weapons.

We also support the conclusion of a convention to ban radiological weapons. We call upon the Conference on Disarmament to intensify its efforts to that end.

Ms. Bahemuka (Kenya), Vice-President, took the Chair.

We will continue our efforts to support the activities of the IAEA and to strengthen its capacity to face new challenges.

Mrs. Núñez de Odremán (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela supports the statement by the representative of Uruguay on behalf of MERCOSUR and associated States. We would like, however, to join in congratulating Mr. ElBaradei on his re-election as Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), as well as on his receiving the Nobel Peace Prize.

We would also like to take this opportunity to underline the position of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on a specific case — the nuclear programme of Iran — and our rejection of resolution GOV/2005/64 of the IAEA Board of Governors, of 11 August 2005, on implementation of the NPT safeguards agreement in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

As a State party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), we wish to reaffirm the need for the universalization of the Treaty. All members of the international community must strictly comply with its norms in order to ensure a world of peace, free of the threat of the unjustified and destructive use of nuclear weapons. At the same time, we defend the inalienable right of all States to develop their own systems to produce nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, including with respect to the complete nuclear fuel production and reprocessing cycle.

In that connection, we recognize that the process of applying the safeguards regime to Iran's nuclear programme, carried out by IAEA in 2003, has produced tangible results, as shown in the Director General's most recent report to the Agency's Board of Governors, submitted in September 2005. Those encouraging results — obtained with the cooperation of Iran, which voluntarily permitted the application of the Additional Protocol and the temporary suspension of its nuclear programme — demonstrate that the correct way to conduct a complete investigation of this case is to address it within the framework of the IAEA, utilizing its technical capacity and the authority that enables it to carry out balanced activities without any political bias.

We must stress that it can be inferred from the report that there is no evidence that the Iranian nuclear programme contravenes the NPT or that the obligations set out in the Treaty are not being complied with because of the programme. The report affirms the need to provide additional time, but in no way does it imply that the IAEA's authority to handle the matter has been exhausted.

Therefore, Venezuela rejects the proposal to refer the case to the Security Council, given that there is no objective reason to justify such an action. That would only further politicize the issue and make its timely resolution more difficult. To refer the issue to the Council would mean that the IAEA would give up on its mission and that would amount to its agreeing that it was unable to handle the matter, despite the fact that it has been doing so successfully. Such an action would be truly contradictory — a sort of self-disqualification that would seriously compromise the IAEA's prestige as a reliable and balanced multilateral body. In effect, the Agency would be submitting to pressures applied by other countries that, possessing nuclear technology, seek to reserve for themselves control over nuclear fuel and its reprocessing in order to maintain dependent relationships, to the detriment of the sovereign right of all countries to achieve their independent development.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela reiterates its position that the consideration of the Islamic Republic of Iran's nuclear development programme must remain within the framework of the IAEA, on the basis of the transparency measures that the Government of Iran has offered and can offer. This should guarantee for the international community the peaceful nature of its nuclear programme.

Undoubtedly, the relationship between the IAEA and Iran should continue to deepen with a view to clearing up all doubts or reservations that may exist. In that regard, we wish to recall the proposal made recently in the General Assembly by the President of Iran, to the effect that public or private entities from other countries participate together with his country in developing its nuclear programme through strategic partnerships. That proposal opens up new avenues towards full transparency for the Iranian nuclear programme.

In conclusion, our delegation reaffirms once again the inalienable right of States to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes within the framework of the NPT and related international norms, without political discrimination or discrimination of any other kind.

Mr. Dolgov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are pleased to welcome Mr. Mohamed

ElBaradei, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and to thank him for presenting the Agency's annual report.

Russia, as an active member of the IAEA, is satisfied with the Agency's highly professional work and recognizes its important and increasing role in strengthening the international nuclear non-proliferation regime and in ensuring the level of confidence needed for cooperation in the peaceful and safe development of nuclear energy production. We fully share the Nobel Prize Committee's high esteem for the role of this international institution. The Nobel Peace Prize awarded to the IAEA and its Director General is clear evidence of the global recognition of the Agency's achievements.

The IAEA is a unique international institution vested with powers to assess States' compliance with their nuclear non-proliferation obligations within the framework of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We call for further improvement of the Agency's verification mechanisms and for further development of its monitoring functions.

The particular urgency of stepping up effective international non-proliferation efforts is dictated by the threat that weapons of mass destruction may fall into the hands of terrorists. The continuing brutal terrorist acts — also perpetrated in Russia — underpin the need to put in place reliable guarantees preventing the access by terrorists to weapons of mass destruction, particularly by strengthening joint efforts to establish a global system for countering new challenges and threats, especially in the nuclear field. The United Nations should, of course, play a central role in the creation of such a system.

Those new challenges underscore the importance of finding new solutions. We are grateful for the broad support for the Russian proposals concerning the drafting of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism. Russia is a participant in the Proliferation Security Initiative and was a sponsor of the Group of Eight Action Plan on Non-Proliferation. Those documents must be fully and strictly implemented. The initiatives are largely interrelated and should enhance the effectiveness of global non-proliferation regimes in the area of weapons of mass destruction.

Application of the Additional Protocol of the IAEA Safeguards Agreement is a pillar of the Agency's activities, serving as an innovative tool for ensuring the transparency of national nuclear programmes. We believe that universalizing the Additional Protocol will be one of the international community's crucial non-proliferation tasks in the years to come. The Russian Federation will continue to provide assistance in the strengthening of the IAEA safeguards system, including by funding a national programme of scientific and technical support for the Agency's safeguards initiative.

Russia respects the interest of States in developing peaceful nuclear technologies and has cooperated with many countries in that area for a number of years. We advocate the broadest possible cooperation in the area of nuclear energy for development. However, the use of the peaceful atom for the production of nuclear weapons must be reliably and safely prevented. We promote methods of nuclear power development that would provide — as an alternative to the proliferation of sensitive technologies — programmes to provide a reliable supply of nuclear fuel on the basis of international cooperation. We support multilateral frameworks for practical cooperation in that regard, particularly the work on this issue carried out within the IAEA.

We believe that the report prepared in early 2005 by the International Nuclear Safety Group, at the initiative of the Director General, on a multilateral approach to the nuclear fuel cycle, opens up new opportunities for strengthening the nuclear-weapon non-proliferation regime and for promoting nuclear power development. We call for continued and more intensive work by the Agency in that regard.

We take note of the Agency's contributions to a research study on innovative nuclear reactors and fuel cycles conducted within the framework of the International Project on Innovative Nuclear Reactors and Fuel Cycles. We believe that the Project will make it possible to work out agreed approaches to prospective nuclear technologies from the standpoint of the economic efficiency and the environmental and non-proliferation safety and security of such technologies.

We highly appreciate the progress made in recent years in the area of strengthening nuclear security. Thanks to the IAEA's active involvement, there have been substantial achievements in terms of increasing the operational safety of nuclear power plans and handling radioactive materials, wastes and sources. This year, changes have been made to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material so as to extend its coverage.

We support IAEA activities in the area of technical cooperation and assistance to developing countries.

Madam President, allow me to dwell on certain aspects of the Agency's activities that have a significant impact on the international community. We note with satisfaction the results of the Fourth Round of the Six-Party Talks in Beijing, which concluded on 19 September, on the settlement of the Korean peninsula nuclear issue. We are looking forward to further progress in the six-party process, with the ultimate goal of denuclearizing the Korean peninsula. We are in favour of finding a balanced solution to this problem that would protect the legitimate interests of all parties.

We view the resolution on the Iranian nuclear programme, adopted on 24 September 2005 by the IAEA Board of Governors, as a signal for continued and more intensive cooperation between the Agency and Iran to clarify the remaining issues. It is our understanding that the Agency's potential is far from being exhausted, and that allows us to keep the settlement process of the Iran issue within the Agency.

We are in favour of more intensive dialogue on this issue among all interested nations. Decisions must be developed that, on the one hand, can remove all doubts about the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear activity, and on the other, ensure the legitimate requirements of that country. The Russian Federation will cooperate further to solve that task.

I wish to confirm our support for General Assembly draft resolution A/60/L.13, entitled "Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency". As a sponsor of the draft resolution, the Russian Federation fully agrees on the importance of the work conducted by the Agency and is confident that that work will continue with a view to strengthening international security.

Mr. Lew Kwang-chul (Republic of Korea): At the outset, my delegation would like to thank Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), for his informative report on the activities of the Agency. We also commend the Director General and his staff for their dedicated and diligent efforts to carry out their responsibilities successfully.

Taking this opportunity, we would also like to join other delegations in congratulating the Agency and its Director General for being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize this year. We believe that this prestigious outcome will be recorded as irrefutable proof of the intense dedication and efforts of the Agency aimed at enhancing peace and security of the world by working to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and enhance the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

Today, my delegation would like to make a brief statement on the North Korean nuclear issue. First of all, we welcome the Joint Statement adopted at the Fourth Round of the Six-Party Talks in Beijing last September. We attach great importance to this document as a basis for achieving the common objective of the verifiable denuclearization of the Korean peninsula in a peaceful manner. We also welcome the commitments made by North Korea to abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programmes and to return, at an early date, to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and IAEA safeguards.

It is certain that the agreement reached at the previous Six-Party Talks laid solid groundwork for progress towards a comprehensive diplomatic resolution of the issue. My delegation earnestly wishes that the Joint Statement, through its full and effective implementation, will lead to steady and substantial progress, not only for the complete resolution of the nuclear question, but also for the achievement of an enduring peace on the Korean peninsula and the consolidation of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime.

As stipulated in the Joint Statement, we also hope that the Fifth Round of the Six-Party Talks, to be held in Beijing in early November, will mark another milestone through agreement on detailed follow-up steps to ensure faithful implementation of the principles set out in the Joint Statement.

For the implementation of the terms of the agreement, verification will remain one of the key elements, if the Six-Party process is to succeed. In this regard, we respect and support the role of the International Atomic Energy Agency in setting a global nuclear non-proliferation regime and conducting its business of verification through its well-established and sophisticated safeguards system. In this regard, we would welcome resolve and readiness on the part of the Agency to conduct the verification work in the most efficient and productive manner. We look forward to the Agency's continued assistance in and contribution to the smooth and efficient resolution of the North Korean nuclear issue.

Mr. Baeidi-Nejad (Islamic Republic of Iran): At the outset, I would like to express the appreciation of my delegation to Mr. ElBaradei for his substantive report to the General Assembly on the main activities of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in the year 2005. This informative report indicates that the Agency is developing its activities in many areas of nuclear technology in the interest of human community. I take this opportunity also to congratulate Mr. ElBaradei and the Agency on receiving the 2005 Nobel Peace prize.

The IAEA was established with the basic purpose of accelerating and enhancing the contribution of atomic energy to peace, health and development throughout the world. The Agency has, therefore, a real responsibility, more than ever before, to assist member States to utilize nuclear energy effectively and efficiently for peaceful purposes.

Nuclear energy today has found an important place in everyday human life. Today, atomic energy is widely used in agriculture and medicine. The utilization of atomic energy and its advanced applications, especially in the field of renewable sources of energy, has increased on a broad scale. Increasing construction and operation of nuclear reactors in electricity production around the globe indicate that more and more States are pursuing nuclear energy as a component of their energy mix in the new century. The new global trend to decrease the use of fossil fuel and the encouragement of States to adopt a "clean air" policy are yet further incentives for further development of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

The essential role of the Agency in the development of activities to enhance the capacity of member States to utilize nuclear energy is also acknowledged by the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which in article IV imposes a commitment on States parties to the Treaty to facilitate the fullest possible exchange of materials, equipment and technological information for peaceful purposes. Furthermore, States parties to the Treaty are to enhance their cooperation to develop nuclear energy without discrimination or restriction.

Unfortunately, the level of cooperation in the past on the part of the developed countries, who are the main suppliers of nuclear high technology, with the developing nations has not been promising. Indeed, nuclear cooperation between the suppliers and recipients has been marked by restriction, hindrance and disruption.

Furthermore, it is an unfortunate fact that being a party to the NPT and the IAEA Safeguards Agreement not only has not facilitated the nuclear cooperation prescribed under the Treaty between the States parties but has even served to create impediments to the peaceful uses of energy. It is even true that non-parties are more richly rewarded through nuclear cooperation. In the case of Israel, nuclear exchanges and transfers of advanced nuclear materials, equipment and technology, facilitated by acquiescence on the part of certain circles, has contributed and continues to contribute to the development of a clandestine Israeli nuclear weapons programme that is endangering global and regional peace and security. If anything, the failure to accept the NPT and safeguard obligations should burden outsiders to the NPT with the most severe restrictions, rather than provide them with impunity.

Iran is determined to exercise its inalienable right under the NPT to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes within the framework of the country's overall economic plan. To that end, Iran is also committed to operating its programme under the IAEA verification system and with increased transparency, in conformity with its basic NPT obligations.

In that context, the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran submitted a formal suggestion during this session of the General Assembly inviting public and private companies to take part in Iran-related activities. On the basis of that policy, Iran has extended its full cooperation to the IAEA in providing the necessary declarations and in allowing short-notice inspections at all relevant sites and facilities. Iran is

ready to continue its cooperation with the IAEA and insists that all parties must abide by the provisions of the NPT, particularly article IV, and strictly adhere to the Statute of the IAEA.

In conclusion, the role and authority of the IAEA in promotional as well as safeguards activities has greatly increased in recent years. That is mainly due to the fact that more and more countries are using atomic energy for peaceful purposes. We should therefore endeavour to strengthen that role by avoiding the use of extra-legal unilateral measures and attempts to use the Agency in support of short-sighted political positions, which would only undermine the authority of the IAEA and should be avoided.

Mr. Martirosyan (Armenia): At the outset, I would like to join other speakers in congratulating Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), on the award of the 2005 Nobel Peace Prize to the Agency and to him personally. I thank him also for the comprehensive annual report on the work done in 2005 and commend his and the Agency's tireless efforts in fulfilling its mandate in a very challenging international environment. On behalf of my Government, I would like to express our readiness to continue to fully cooperate with the Agency and its leadership.

The debate on the deterrence aspect of nuclear weapons has been fuelled by new developments in the last several years and has raised numerous questions as to the correctness of such perceptions. The spread of terrorism has further brought these perceptions into question, as nuclear deterrence is clearly ineffective against terrorist groups. It is evident, therefore, that the present nuclear-arms-control regime needs a fresh look and approach in order to address these growing challenges to the overall global system of security.

Existing loopholes in the non-proliferation regime enable State and non-State actors to abuse the system, despite promises to use nuclear materials for peaceful purposes only. Complicating the situation is the fact that effective control over access to nuclear-weapon technologies has grown increasingly difficult given the thin line between technical barriers to designing the weapons and the processing phases.

In that respect, we would like to welcome once again the adoption by this body of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, which my Prime Minister signed on behalf of the Armenian Government during the 2005 summit.

The International Atomic Energy Agency plays an important role in ensuring that nuclear technologies and materials are used for peaceful purposes only. As a non-nuclear-weapon State and a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), Armenia attaches great importance to the Agency's activities on the further improvement of the non-proliferation regime and nuclear verification. In that respect, we would like to stress the importance of the Agency's safeguards system and the need to take further steps to reinforce it. Last year Armenia ratified the Additional Protocol to the Safeguards Agreement, once again demonstrating its serious approach to cooperation with the Agency. As we stated during the seventh Review Conference of the parties to the NPT, Armenia supports the suggestion made by the Agency's Director General in connection with acknowledging the fact that the Additional Protocol is an integral part of the Agency's safeguards in every country party to the NPT.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my country's deep satisfaction with respect to its cooperation with the IAEA. We have been cooperating with the Agency in several fields since 1995. In that context, high priority is given to nuclear safety and verification. Based on the conviction that safeguards promote greater confidence among States, Armenia has been receiving inspections — on average more than 30 missions per year — from the IAEA since signing the agreement between the Republic of Armenia and the Agency on the application of safeguards in connection with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in 1993.

Inspection results have effectively demonstrated that Armenia is fulfilling the commitments envisaged in the agreement. Zero discrepancy has been found from day one on declared and inspected nuclear materials, thus putting to rest once again the many unsubstantiated and absurd allegations against my country that some our of our neighbours attempt to make from time to time. As a result of our cooperation, we have succeeded in upgrading the safety of the Armenian nuclear power plant.

Armenia's national legislation in the field of the peaceful use of nuclear energy is constantly improving, due to the adoption of a number of reform initiatives

relating to the relevant national law. The reforms are related mainly to upgrading the safety and security of our nuclear plant and to the verification regime. In that same vein, Armenia has signed the Final Act of the Conference to Consider and Adopt Proposed Amendments to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material, the ratification of which is under way.

The physical protection of the nuclear power plant is a priority area for our Government. Last year we accepted the International Physical Protection Advisory Service mission and are expecting its report by the end of this year. In late 2005 Armenia will host another important mission from the Operational Safety Assessment Review Team, whose report will be finalized in 2006.

Nuclear energy is very important to Armenia, as it supplies about 40 per cent of the country's energy needs. Armenia was forced to restart its nuclear power plant in 1995 because of the continued blockade against it and due to the unresolved nature of the conflicts in the region and the resulting instability, which had negatively affected the supply of gas for thermo-power stations. As an energy security issue, it has a great impact on the overall security of the country.

The energy demand in Armenia continues to increase as a result of the double-digit economic growth registered in the Republic over the last five years. It is not coincidental, therefore, that our country is seriously considering the possibility of building a new nuclear power plant.

In that regard, we thank the Director General for his promise of assistance — made during his recent visit to Armenia — in the carrying out of a feasibility study for its construction. It should be noted that this is fully in line with the conclusions of the International Ministerial Conference held in Paris. Moreover, we believe that a new nuclear power plant would have regional significance as well, as it could supply energy to those neighbouring countries with shortages of electricity.

All of those successes would have been hard to achieve had it not been for bilateral cooperation with other Member States. I would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to those countries that are providing the Armenian nuclear power plant and Regulatory Authority with continued and substantial assistance.

Mr. Requiejo Gual (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei for presenting the annual report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and to congratulate him on his election to a new term as Director General of the Agency.

We also take this opportunity to reiterate our congratulations to the IAEA and its Director General on receiving the 2005 Nobel Peace Prize. The awarding of that well-deserved recognition takes place at a particularly complex juncture of the history of mankind. The existence of large arsenals of nuclear weapons and the danger of their proliferation, as well as the development of new types of nuclear weapons and the existence of strategic defence doctrines that increasingly rely on the use and possession of those weapons, continue to be a serious threat to all mankind. In such circumstances, we are firmly convinced that the only genuine solution is the total elimination of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons.

The annual report of the Agency indicates positive results for 2004. In that regard, we stress the adoption by the Board of Governors in 2004 of the Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy, to which Cuba attaches special importance, and we call upon the mobilization of new resources, within the framework of the Programme, to energize that important field. We also welcome the outcome of the recent IAEA General Conference, in which important resolutions were adopted to promote activities in the Agency's various areas of focus.

Cuba attaches great importance to the IAEA's work and reiterates the need to attain an appropriate balance among the three fundamental pillars of that Organization: technical cooperation, security and verification. Those three pillars should be implemented in a balanced way, addressing the interests and priorities of all member States.

The General Assembly should reaffirm the role of the IAEA not only as a guarantor of the peaceful use of nuclear energy, but as an institution for the promotion and execution of international cooperation in that field.

My Government acknowledges the important role of nuclear technologies for sustainable development,

and considers the IAEA's technical cooperation to be a key element of the process of technology transfer. Therefore, the imposition of restrictive and unilateral measures in the exchange of equipment, material and scientific and technological information for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy should cease.

We reaffirm the role of the IAEA in the verification of commitments to non-proliferation. In that regard, we reject the attempt of some Powers to prejudge the peaceful or non-peaceful nature of the nuclear programmes of specific countries, bypassing the IAEA, which is the only international organization with the mandate and technical capacity to verify the nuclear activities of States. We denounce the manipulation of information regarding IAEA processes of verification in order to foment a negative opinion of some countries in the pursuit of political goals, as well as double standards in addressing issues of non-proliferation.

Cuba has carefully followed the reports submitted by the Director General to the Board of Governors on the implementation of the safeguards agreements concerning the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), as well as the Board's relevant resolutions. My Government has fully supported the statements of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, which has expressed its deep concern about the content of those resolutions and the methods leading to their adoption, while acknowledging the unbiased and professional attitude of the IAEA secretariat and welcoming the substantive progress in and the resolution of outstanding issues, confirmed in the most recent reports of the Director General to the Board of Governors.

In that context, we strongly reject attempts to deprive any country of its inalienable right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy, provided that those rights are exercised consistent with their safeguards obligations.

The Cuban Government continues to take steps that clearly reflect its political will to fulfil the obligations undertaken as a State party to the NPT and the Tlatelolco Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Since the entry into force of our Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement with the IAEA and its relevant Additional Protocol, my Government has continued to fulfil its obligations, reaffirming the will of Cuba to keep strengthening its cooperation with the IAEA in the development of the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

Recently, Cuba participated actively and constructively in the International Conference of States Parties and Signatories of Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones, as well as in the Review Conference of the States Parties to the NPT, which regrettably ended without agreement on substantive issues due to the lack of will of some nuclear-weapon States to take concrete steps towards disarmament.

Today more than ever, it is crucial to work to strengthen the IAEA, and particularly to support its technical cooperation activities. Cuba considers that pillar to be a first priority, as reflected in our high rates of efficiency and effectiveness in the fulfilment of our Technical Cooperation Programme with the IAEA, in the effectual implementation rate of our projects, in the growing contributions of our experts to cooperation activities with other countries, and in the fulfilment of our commitment to the Technical Cooperation Fund and to national funding requirements.

My Government welcomes the entry into force of the Regional Cooperative Agreement for the Advancement of Nuclear Science and Technology in Latin America and the Caribbean. The Agreement has proved to be the most important way to promote cooperation and exchange among the countries of our region in the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

My country carefully follows activities in nuclear and radiological safety, including physical protection. In that context, we continue to strengthen our material and organizational infrastructure, as well as our human resource training.

Cuba supports the IAEA's efforts to implement programmes and activities designed to prevent nuclear terrorism, without affecting the human and financial resources earmarked for sustainable social and economic development. In that regard, we reiterate that the imposition of mechanisms of selective composition that are non-transparent and outside the framework of the United Nations and international treaties is in no way an appropriate response to the phenomenon of international terrorism, including in its relation to the potential use of weapons of mass destruction, their delivery systems or related materials.

In conclusion, I wish to affirm that the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to the IAEA should act as an

incentive to consolidating the transparent, objective, professional and impartial role of the Agency based on the highest ethical principles, in which the important tasks laid down in its statute combine in a harmonious and balanced way. As always, the Agency and the Director General can count on the full support of the Cuban Government in that endeavour.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/60/L.13.

Before I call on representatives who wish to speak in explanation of vote, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

I now call on the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to speak in explanation of vote.

Mr. Pak Gil Yon (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): On behalf of the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, I would like to make the following statement with regard to draft resolution A/60/L.13.

First, it is not relevant for the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to mention in its report the nuclear issue of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. There are no relations whatsoever between Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the IAEA. In this regard, I would like to remind the Assembly that the Democratic People's Republic is not a member of the IAEA or a State party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Furthermore, the IAEA is not in a position to deal with the Korean Peninsula nuclear issue, which is a political-military question between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States of America.

Secondly, the IAEA has dealt with the nuclear issue on the Korean Peninsula with prejudice. The nuclear issue is a product of the hostile policy of the United States towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The United States has been threatening the Democratic People's Republic with nuclear weapons for over half a century. In particular, President Bush, soon after he took power, designated the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as part of an axis of evil and threatened a pre-emptive nuclear attack. How did the IAEA handle the nuclear issue that came about as a political-military dispute between the small and weak Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the super-Power, the United States, in warring status? The IAEA, at the instruction of the super-Power, handled the Korean Peninsula nuclear issue with prejudice, using double standards and discarding the principle of equity — the lifeline of international organizations.

We can see similar examples in the nuclear issue of South Korea. The Beijing joint statement, correctly understood, does not impose obligations solely on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, but stipulates obligations also for the United States and South Korea — the direct parties to the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. The unilateral dismantling by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of its nuclear programme would not bring about the denuclearization of the Peninsula without the United States implementing its obligations in accordance with the joint statement.

The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will vote against the draft resolution because its purpose is to distort the nature of the Korean Peninsula nuclear issue and because it does not in any way contribute to the resolution of the matter.

The Acting President: We have heard the only speaker in explanation of vote before the voting.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/60/L.13.

The following States have added their names to the list of sponsors of the draft resolution: Andorra, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Ecuador, France, Gabon, Guatemala, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia, the Netherlands, Nicaragua, the Philippines, Serbia and Montenegro, Spain, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uruguay and Zambia.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei

Darussalam, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia and Montenegro, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia

Against:

Democratic People's Republic of Korea

Draft resolution A/60/L.13 was adopted by 137 votes to 1 (resolution 60/6).

[*Subsequently, the delegations of Estonia and Myanmar informed the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour.*]

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 84?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 13

The situation in Central America: progress in fashioning a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development

Report of the Secretary-General (A/60/218)

Draft decision (A/60/L.14)

The Acting President: I now call on the representative of Nicaragua to introduce draft decision A/60/L.14.

Mr. Sevilla Somoza (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the States members of the Central American Integration System: Belize, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama and my own country, Nicaragua.

I wish first to thank the Secretary-General for his consolidated report, entitled "The situation in Central America", on the implementation over the past two years of all resolutions concerning Central America.

After incommensurate sacrifices and with the assistance of the international community, and the United Nations in particular, Central America has embarked on an era of solid peace and democracy that have lasted for several years now and which we hope will endure indefinitely. Thanks to the policies and actions being implemented by Governments to raise the standards of living of their own peoples, as well as to the quantitative and qualitative improvement of the Integration System, the long decades of armed violence and the acute economic and social crises that plagued most of our countries have now been overcome.

Today, all Central American Governments enjoy the legitimacy acquired through free elections; their economies are growing and their political systems are becoming more open and democratic. With the new century and ongoing peace, we have launched, in countries where conditions allow, a period of transformation and adaptation of our political, economic and social structures in order to achieve sustainable human development and to meet the Millennium Development Goals.

Many problems inherent to developing countries — widespread poverty, unemployment, lack of drinking water, health problems, corruption and

political instability — persist and we are addressing them. We are confident that we will be able to solve those problems through our own efforts and with the generous assistance of international agencies and friendly countries.

I wish to emphasize, however, the participation of the United Nations in a process that has led Central America from war to negotiation, and from negotiation to peace and the path of development, and guided us through the many problems we have faced, through our failures and successes — in other words, the experiences that we have lived and felt and that now serve as lessons and examples to help other regions of the world overcome similar situations.

The first resolution on Central America was adopted by the General Assembly in 1983 in the midst of the cold war and at a time when three of our countries were riven by fierce civil wars. In that resolution, the international community expressed its concern at the exacerbation of and tension caused by conflicts in Central America, and stressed the need to contribute to the building of peace on solid foundations, enabling the establishment of a genuine democratic process, respect for human rights and economic and social development.

As a result of the decision taken by Central Americans to meet the historic challenge of forging a future of peace for their region, the General Assembly, four years after adopting that first resolution, asked the Secretary-General to promote a Special Programme for Economic Cooperation in Central America (PEC). That initiative was innovative in that it was designed to be implemented in national territories immersed in armed conflict and to link actions already being undertaken by the United Nations system to development efforts in order to make peacebuilding more effective.

Under the coordination of the United Nations Development Programme, the PEC contributed to the emergence of an intraregional and international consensus allowing each country to determine its own development priorities, strengthen the Central American Integration System, mobilize international resources for the region and guide its social programmes. It also strengthened the role to be played by the International Conference on Central American Refugees as a key instrument of the PEC.

In connection with the refugees created in the subregion as a result of widespread violence, we recall the 1984 Cartagena Declaration on Refugees, which became a creative and innovative instrument for protection and is now considered to be an important contribution to international law. Its importance has been reiterated in international forums, and most Latin American countries have incorporated it into their legislation. Its use in the region broadened the definition or concept of refugees set out in the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol.

The United Nations Observer Group in Central America (ONUCA) was established in December 1989 in order to monitor on the ground the cessation of assistance to irregular forces and insurrection movements, as well as the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of Contra factions in Nicaragua from May to July 1990. It also monitored the ceasefire negotiated in that country as part of the demobilization process. The Central American Presidents met in Montelimar, Nicaragua, to request ONUCA to set a precedent by destroying all collected weapons *in situ* and in the presence of representatives of the Governments of the other Central American countries. ONUCA's mandate was thereby redefined in order to avert the proliferation of and illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons.

Another Central American initiative was connected to United Nations participation in the quest for peace in El Salvador, when, in order to promote action and to help the Secretary-General in his efforts to that end, the term "Friends of the Secretary-General" was created and applied.

The United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL) was established on 20 May 1991 to monitor the implementation of all agreements between the Government of El Salvador and the Frente Farabundo Marti para la Liberación Nacional. The Mission was later broadened in January 1992 to cover the verification of all aspects of the ceasefire and separation of forces, as well as the agreement on the National Civil Police, which provided for ONUSAL's oversight of the maintenance of public order during the transition period as the National Civil Police was being established. Having completed its mandate, the Mission was closed in 1995.

The United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala (MINUGUA) began operating in 1994 and lasted a decade. MINUGUA operations in the field

were a fruitful example of multidimensional peacebuilding. An innovative transition strategy was developed for the last years of the Mission in order to strengthen Guatemala's national capacity to promote the peace agreement programme once the United Nations presence was withdrawn and to ensure that the peace priorities would be reflected in the new Government's policies.

The creation of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations is closely linked to the lessons and the experience gained by United Nations Missions deployed to Central American countries. As we have previously stated, that experience established the need to link peace operations and development efforts in order to make peacebuilding and peacekeeping more effective.

In 1990, the United Nations Observer Mission to Verify the Electoral Process in Nicaragua (ONUVEN) was the first United Nations mission to monitor an electoral process in an independent State. Although ONUVEN, which did not include military personnel, was established by a resolution of the General Assembly as an election assistance measure and not as an attempt to resolve the Nicaraguan conflict, the Mission undoubtedly played an important role in the resolution of the conflict. The United Nations experience in Nicaragua served as a basis for the 1992 establishment of the Electoral Assistance Division within the Department of Political Affairs, which is tasked with coordinating the activities of the United Nations system in the field of electoral assistance.

In brief, we could say that the United Nations gained a pioneering experience in Central America that resulted in, among other things, establishing a linkage between peace operations and development programmes — a concept that found its expression in the establishment of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, in the establishment of groups of friends of the Secretary-General to collaborate in his efforts in the quest for peace, in the first experience in the monitoring of elections, which provided the basis for the Electoral Assistance Division, and in the linkage of peace operations with the destruction of small arms and light weapons to prevent their illicit trade.

Today, Central America is a changed region, and we stand ready to collaborate with the international community by putting our experience at the service of all those States that are currently in a conflict situation. Our countries believe that their experience can serve to build bridges linking the vision of collective security and international cooperation for development in post-conflict peacekeeping efforts.

In conclusion, on behalf of our countries, I would like to thank the United Nations, the Secretaries-General whose mandates fell within that period, the Member States of the Organization and, in particular, those Governments that directly assist our countries in the search for peace, democracy and development.

I have the honour of introducing the draft decision on agenda item 13, contained in document A/60/L.14, entitled "The situation in Central America: progress in fashioning a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development". My delegation, following consultations with interested delegations from States members of the Central American Integration System and other States, has decided to submit for the consideration of the General Assembly this draft decision, which has only one paragraph:

> "The General Assembly, noting the progress achieved in the region, decides that the item entitled 'The situation in Central America: progress in fashioning a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development' shall remain on the agenda of the Assembly, beginning with the sixty-first session, for consideration upon notification by a Member State."

I have made an oral correction, changing "sixtieth session", as it appears in the text, to "sixty-first session".

My delegation and the delegations consulted consider that the problems dealt with under this agenda item have largely been overcome by the Central American countries. We therefore believe that it is no longer relevant to introduce a draft resolution under this agenda item, in the light of the recommendations for the rationalization of the work of the General Assembly and in order not to distract the Organization's attention from more pressing problems to be tackled in other regions of the world. We request that this draft decision be adopted by consensus.

Ms. Bethel (Bahamas): I have the honour to make this statement on behalf of the States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) that are Members of the United Nations. Allow me, at the outset, to extend our condolences to the Governments

and peoples of Central America in the aftermath of the recent series of natural disasters that have resulted in the loss of life and the destruction of property in the countries of the region, particularly in Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica. CARICOM, a community composed of developing countries that have endured the ravages of natural disasters, is well aware of the harmful impact that those events will have on efforts to advance development initiatives. We trust, therefore, that the countries of Central America will be provided with sustained assistance so that the advances already made will not be jeopardized.

Since the General Assembly first took up consideration of the agenda item on the situation in Central America, we have witnessed a renaissance of the region as it became a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development. We are grateful to the Secretary-General for the informative annual reports on this agenda item. Those reports have highlighted the unique realities of each country in the region in the areas of governance, human rights, public security, judicial reform, regional and extra-regional institution-building and border issues, among others. We acknowledge the many challenges that each country has encountered. More importantly, however, we commend the countries of Central America for the efforts they have made, in spite of the challenges, to engender more peaceful, democratic and equitable societies. We also recognize with satisfaction the international assistance rendered to the region, as outlined in the reports of the Secretary-General.

An important aspect of the consolidation of peace in the region has been the regional integration process facilitated by the Central American Integration System (SICA). The System is a symbol of the new face of Central America. Today, one of our fellow CARICOM Member States, Belize, participates as a member of SICA.

At the initiative of Belize, in 2002, CARICOM and SICA held their first summit and agreed to reinforce interregional relations and partnerships. In the joint declaration issued at the conclusion of that summit, Caribbean and Central American leaders agreed to strengthen cooperation and coordinate actions in areas such as education, health, poverty elimination, the environment, trade and investment. That historic summit highlighted the reality that there is much common ground between our two regions.

The recently concluded CARICOM-Costa Rica free trade agreement reflects CARICOM's desire to foster closer ties with countries in Central America. In fact, the free trade agreement is seen not only as an opportunity to strengthen trade between CARICOM and Costa Rica but also as an opportunity to enhance our alliances to promote social, political, cultural and environmental cooperation. Thus, we in CARICOM look forward to the entry into force of that agreement.

Given the aforementioned undertakings, which have all served to enhance the partnership between CARICOM and Central America, we in CARICOM are hopeful that a peaceful resolution to the territorial dispute between Belize and Guatemala will be achieved in the near future. We note that the two countries have agreed on a framework for negotiations and confidence-building measures that seeks to maintain and deepen their friendly relationship until the territorial dispute is permanently resolved. We are encouraged by that new development and pledge our continued support for a just and lasting resolution to the dispute.

CARICOM recognizes the efforts of Central American leaders and peoples, as well as the efforts of those in the international community that have influenced the region's transformation. There are, however, both persistent and new challenges, some of which, as the Secretary-General's report (A/60/218) acknowledges, have been generated by external factors. We trust that the international community will maintain its full support to the region, particularly in the face of those challenges.

Ms. Brazier (United Kingdom): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and those countries that have aligned themselves with this statement.

May I first offer the deepest sympathies of the European Union to those Central American countries that have been affected by tropical storms Stan and Alpha and hurricane Beta. Our thoughts are with you at this difficult time. The EU is glad to have provided 1.7 million euros in humanitarian aid to El Salvador and Guatemala in response to the recent flooding and tropical storm Stan.

The European Union and Central America share a long history of cooperation in the political, economic and social spheres. Perhaps one of the most important goals we share is that of achieving closer regional

integration. Like the European Union, Central American countries have found that through regional integration it is possible to overcome prolonged internal conflict, reduce vulnerability to external shocks, including natural disasters, and build a regional economic platform, which enables our countries to trade and compete more effectively in a globalized world. As the Secretary-General says in paragraph 68 of his report (*A/60/218*), "Central American countries have made significant strides in cooperating towards the establishment of a peaceful region".

In 1983, when this agenda item was first brought before the General Assembly, the region was in a very difficult situation. Then, civil war and social and economic disintegration were facts of life for the citizens of Central American countries. Today, the region has made much progress towards peace and stability, democracy and sustainable development.

Through the San Jose Dialogue, the EU has been able to contribute to the process of peacebuilding and democratization in the Central American region. In addition, since 2001, the European Commission has had a programme of national and regional cooperation with six Central American countries, totalling 655 million euros. This cooperation will continue in the years ahead. A new strategy for cooperation for the years 2007 to 2013 is currently being agreed, and will focus particularly on issues of regional integration.

The European Union knows from its own experience that post-conflict transition can take many years. Central American countries still face major challenges, such as the fight against impunity, efforts to promote transparency and democracy and poverty reduction, but these are different issues from those of 20 years ago. The EU is, therefore, content with the Nicaraguan proposal for a draft decision to maintain this item on the General Assembly's agenda, for consideration upon notification by a Member State.

Ms. Juul (Norway): Central America has recently been severely struck by natural disasters, and we deeply regret the loss of human lives and the scores of victims in the wake of tropical storm Stan in El Salvador and Guatemala. We commend the Governments of El Salvador and Guatemala on their efforts to save lives and rapidly assist the affected population, including the indigenous community.

The Norwegian parliament has allocated 60 million Norwegian kroner — about $9.25 million — in additional funds for emergency relief in Central America. These funds will be channelled through the United Nations, the Red Cross system and non-governmental organizations.

Even though many years have passed since the end of armed conflict in Central America, the region is still facing a number of major challenges, such as the eradication of poverty, the consolidation of democracy and the safeguarding of human rights. Good governance, sustainable economic development and strengthening of the judicial systems continue to be key issues. It is, however, encouraging to see that the Governments of Central America are continuing, and even stepping up, their fight against corruption.

Peaceful and transparent elections are now the rule rather than the exception in Central America, which bears witness to the gradual consolidation of democracy in these countries. We commend the United Nations agencies and the Organization of American States on their longstanding support for the election process, to which Norway has also contributed.

We would like to commend the President of Guatemala on his strong commitment to the Peace Accords and on the progress that his Government has made in such important areas as reduction of the armed forces. The final withdrawal of the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala last year after 10 years in the field was a positive sign. However, there is still a great need for the international community to continue supporting the implementation of the Peace Accords. We consider the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to be the most appropriate international mechanism to follow up the post-conflict situation in Guatemala today, and we commend the Government on having invited the High Commissioner to open an office in Guatemala.

The President returned to the Chair.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

We shall now proceed to consider draft decision A/60/L.14, as orally corrected.

I wish to announce that Uruguay has joined the list of sponsors.

The Assembly will now take action on draft decision A/60/L.14, as orally corrected.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft decision A/60/L. 14, as orally corrected?

The draft decision, as orally corrected, was adopted.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 13?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 16

Zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic

Draft decision (A/60/L.11)

The President: Uruguay has joined the list of sponsors of draft decision A/60/L.11.

The Assembly will now take action on draft decision A/60/L.11.

May I take it that the General Assembly decides to adopt draft decision A/60/L.11?

The draft decision was adopted.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 16?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 72

Holocaust remembrance

Draft resolution (A/60/L.12)

The President: On 24 January 2005, the General Assembly held its first-ever special session to commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of the liberation of the Nazi concentration camps. At that session, the Assembly unanimously condemned the horrors of Nazi concentration camps. We paid solemn tribute to the millions of innocent victims of that unspeakable atrocity.

Genocide was committed against the Jews of Europe during the Holocaust. Hundreds of thousands of people of other ethnic origins and religious and political backgrounds fell victim to that crime against humanity.

This year we are celebrating the sixtieth anniversary of the United Nations, erected from the ashes of the Second World War. The United Nations was set up to protect humankind from the scourge of war and to serve as an effective international institution for the promotion of human rights, the rule of law and socio-economic development for all. In that context, I welcome the inscription of this new agenda item entitled "Holocaust remembrance".

The Holocaust also reminds us of the crimes of genocide committed since the Second World War. It must therefore be a unifying historic warning around which we must rally, not only to recall the grievous crimes committed in human history but also to reaffirm our unfaltering resolve to prevent the recurrence of such crimes. We cannot, after the horrors in Cambodia, Rwanda and Srebrenica, continue to repeat, "Never again".

Last September, after the 2005 world summit, our leaders did not fail to live up to that test when they unanimously accepted the responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. This is a major step towards preventing genocide in future.

It is in the spirit both of remembering the crimes of the past and preventing their recurrence in future that we must consider the draft resolution on Holocaust remembrance.

I now give the floor to the representative of Israel to introduce draft resolution A/60/L.12.

Mr. Gillerman (Israel): It is an honour for me to address the Assembly, on behalf of the State of Israel, on an item of such importance to my country and my people and to victims and survivors of the Holocaust of all faiths and nationalities across the globe. I feel moved and privileged to present this historic draft resolution today, as an Israeli, a Jew, a human being and the child of a family of Holocaust victims.

This year, as we mark the sixtieth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations, we also mark the sixtieth year since the end of the Second World War and the liberation of the Nazi concentration camps.

The unique connection between those two events is testimony to the fact that the establishment of the United Nations, its founding principles and its noble mission were the world's answer to the horrors of the Second World War and the tragedy of the Holocaust, as

is reflected in the very first clauses of the Charter of the United Nations.

The Holocaust constituted a systematic and barbarous attempt to annihilate an entire people in a manner and with a magnitude that have no parallel in human history. Six million Jews — a full third of the Jewish people — together with countless other minorities, were murdered, many of them in death camps, factories of death designed specifically for that purpose.

And yet, while the Holocaust was a unique tragedy for the Jewish people, its lessons are universal. The Holocaust was carried out at the height of the rational age, and it represents a watershed in human history. It brought us face to face with the full extent of man's capacity for inhumanity to his fellow man. It revealed the potential to pervert technology, philosophy, culture and ideology to commit acts on an unimaginable scale and with an unthinkable degree of cruelty. It showed that while Jews might be the first victims of anti-Semitism, they are rarely the last. It taught, as Elie Wiesel has said, that indifference to human suffering is not only a sin, it is a punishment, and that by denying the other's humanity we betray our own.

By so shocking the conscience of humankind, the Holocaust served as a critical impetus for the development of human rights; the drafting of landmark international conventions such as the Genocide Convention; and for the very establishment of this Organization.

The United Nations was founded on the ashes of the Holocaust and the commitment to "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war" and uphold and protect the "dignity and worth of the human person". The United Nations bears a special responsibility to ensure that the Holocaust and its lessons are never forgotten and that this tragedy will forever stand as a warning to all people of the dangers of hatred, bigotry, racism and prejudice.

The greatest tribute that we, as an Organization, as Member States and as individuals, can pay to the memory of the victims, to the suffering of the survivors and to the legacy of the liberators is to vow together: "Never again".

As Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom has stated from this very rostrum, we stand on the brink of the moment when this terrible event will change from memory to history. As the generation of Holocaust survivors and liberators dwindles, the torch of remembrance, of bearing witness and of education must continue forward. It is our duty to the past and our commitment to the future.

In January 2005, States Members of the United Nations convened in this Hall for a historic special session of the General Assembly to commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of the liberation of the Nazi concentration camps.

At that session, Member States affirmed the important role and responsibility of the United Nations in Holocaust remembrance and education to honour the victims and survivors of the Holocaust and to stand watch against the re-emergence of such evil, for the benefit of future generations.

The fulfilment of that responsibility becomes ever more urgent in the face of an alarming increase in global acts of anti-Semitism, Holocaust denial, racism and religious intolerance. Sadly, today there is no shortage of human suffering. Oppression, the de-legitimization of peoples and discrimination continue. The horror of the Holocaust has, to our collective shame, not prevented other genocides from occurring. These facts compel us to establish mechanisms that will ensure that future generations will never forget the Holocaust or its lessons.

It is imperative that all States learn the lessons of the Holocaust, for the sanctity of life, for the preservation of humanity and for the prevention of such atrocities in the future. The draft resolution submitted under the agenda item, contained in document A/60/L.12, is intended to further advance those objectives. It seeks to give expression to the commitment to Holocaust remembrance and education within the United Nations system. The importance of the resolution is reinforced by the fact that it would represent the first time the United Nations, in its 60-year history, adopts a resolution relating to the Holocaust.

The draft resolution comprises 10 preambular paragraphs and six operative paragraphs and is the product of consultations with a large number of interested delegations. In its preambular section, the draft resolution recalls several key provisions from relevant human rights instruments and notes the indelible link between the United Nations and the

unique tragedy of the Second World War. It takes note of the fact that the sixtieth session of the General Assembly is taking place during the sixtieth year of the defeat of the Nazi regime, and reaffirms that the Holocaust will forever be a warning to all peoples of the dangers of hatred, bigotry, racism, and prejudice.

In its operative part, the resolution calls on the United Nations, inter alia, to designate 27 January as an annual International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust. It urges Member States to develop educational programmes to inculcate future generations with the lessons of the Holocaust in order to help prevent future acts of genocide. It further rejects any denial of the Holocaust and condemns without reservation all manifestations of religious intolerance, incitement, harassment or violence against persons or communities based on ethnic origin or religious belief, wherever they occur.

In addition, the resolution requests the Secretary-General to establish a programme of outreach on the subject of the Holocaust and the United Nations, as well as measures to mobilize civil society for Holocaust remembrance and education, with a mandate to report back to the General Assembly on the establishment and implementation of that United Nations programme.

The initial sponsors of the resolution, Australia, Canada, the Russian Federation, the United States of America and Israel, are very appreciative of the overwhelming support the resolution received when it was submitted. At that time, the resolution had 90 sponsors. Since then, the following States have joined as sponsors: Equatorial Guinea, Ecuador, Gabon, Gambia, Liberia, Nicaragua, Panama and Sierra Leone.

In our deliberations with other Member States, we have received vast support for the resolution. We urge all States to sponsor this important resolution. We would also like to express our appreciation to Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his public support and commitment to the resolution, and for the issue of Holocaust remembrance and education in general.

I would also like to thank you, Mr. President, for the leadership and compassion you have shown throughout this process and in this matter.

We look forward to the adoption of the draft resolution by consensus, so that the Organization and its Member States can, in one voice, demonstrate their commitment to the cause of Holocaust remembrance and education, act to help prevent future acts of genocide and advance the fulfilment by the United Nations of its core mission and founding principles.

Let all those who were led to nameless deaths be given an everlasting name here in this Hall today. In the words of the Prophet of Israel, Isaiah:

(*quoted in Hebrew, then in English*)

> "And I will give them in my house and within my walls a memorial and a name ... and it shall not be cut off." (*Isaiah 56:5*)

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Per Stig Moeller, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Denmark.

Mr. Moeller (Denmark): The Danish Government wishes to lend its active support to the draft resolution on Holocaust remembrance introduced by Israel. We concur fully with the views that will later be expressed by the presidency of the European Union.

Denmark is a member of the Task Force for Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research. We hope through our membership to be able to stimulate further research on and awareness of the Holocaust and other genocides. A Danish research centre on these matters has been established and 27 January has been designated "Auschwitz Day".

The Danish experience of the Holocaust is primarily related to the operation to rescue the Jewish community in Denmark during the month of October 1943, a spontaneous action by the Danish people, made possible in part by the generous acceptance of Denmark's Jewish refugees by Sweden — your own country, Mr. President. That event illustrates an important point, which is that one has to take action when ethnic cleansing and genocide are on the march. Passivity and silence must not become accomplices in the crime. Responsibility to protect populations from genocide and other crimes against humanity is an imperative. You are not guilty because you belong to a certain race, but you are guilty if you pursue people because they belong to a certain race.

We have unfortunately been witness to genocide and ethnic cleansing since the Holocaust, as if we have not learned the lessons of the past. But we have also seen a major breakthrough in the strengthening of the international legal order since then. I am, of course,

referring here to the establishment of the various ad hoc international criminal tribunals and in particular to the permanent International Criminal Court (ICC), which has the competence to prosecute and convict persons who have committed, participated in or ordered the committing of the crime of genocide.

The Danish Government believes that the ICC will have a preventive effect in deterring governmental regimes from carrying out a policy of genocide. At the same time, we lend our full support to the effective functioning of the ICC in its pursuit of justice.

We must all learn from the hard lessons of the past, and in that spirit we welcome the draft resolution on Holocaust remembrance as a timely initiative.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Phillipe Douste-Blazy, Minister for Foreign Affairs of France.

Mr. Douste-Blazy (France) (*spoke in French*): As I take the floor to speak in France's name before this Assembly, allow me to say how moved I am. To speak of the Holocaust is neither a banal nor a trivial matter. As Primo Levi noted in his masterpiece, "If This Is a Man", the Shoah is about man, his dignity and freedom.

We who have gathered in this forum are all linked by the memory and history of the Holocaust. The United Nations came into existence out of the rejection of barbarism and Nazi violence. It enshrines in its founding Charter the values that bring us together and are the foundation of this Assembly, values that are characterized by the rejection of extermination and that forcefully reject what happened in Europe at that time. The strength of multilateralism, which this forum expresses, is to build the future of peoples on all the lessons learned from the past. Some could say after the Shoah that they did not know — today, it is no longer possible to say one did not know.

Remembrance of the Holocaust today is our responsibility. It is to build our future on the knowledge and clear conscience of the past — it is also to uphold a certain idea of man.

France, like all its European partners, strongly supported the decision to hold the special session last January to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the liberation of the Nazi concentration camps. Sixty years ago, the horror-struck Allies put an end to the extermination camps, those places of death whose names remain forever engraved in our memories: Belzec, Sobibor, Majdanek, Treblinka, Auschwitz.

The 60th anniversary has been marked by events and commemorations throughout the year; the most moving being the international ceremony at Auschwitz. All those events were a forceful expression of the international community's duty to remember.

In the face of radical evil and a plan for systematic extermination and in the face of the negationism that sometimes appears in one place or another, all mankind must remember and remain vigilant. So it is for this Assembly, which expresses the universal conscience but also the wish for peace and concord among nations, to send a clear message, as was sent on 27 January in this General Assembly. It is that same message we wish to express and to reaffirm today.

France, like its European partners, is co-sponsoring the draft resolution on the Holocaust. We have two fundamental reasons for that commitment. The first concerns the duty to remember. In July 1995, in his speech at the Vélodrome d'Hiver, the President of the French Republic, Jacques Chirac, recognized the responsibility of the French State in collaborating with the occupying Power in the destruction it wrought. He strongly affirmed that collective memory is an imprescriptible principle, and also affirmed the ethical imperative of collectively shared remembrance.

My country thus stood behind the initiative to designate 27 January as the International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Shoah. That idea was adopted in 2002 by the Council of Europe and has since been taken up by many States and other international organizations, including the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).

By tabling today's draft resolution, the United Nations salutes the designation of 27 January as the International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust. There is, however, another reason why France fully approves the initiative before us. The duty to remember, 60 years after the tragedy, must now be directed to new generations. The last Holocaust survivors are leaving us and only a handful now remain. If the duty to remember is to be passed on today, then our duty is to educate — and that will be even more true for the future. If a crime such as

genocide is not to happen again in the future, the flame of memory must not be extinguished and must be passed from generation to generation.

That is more than a necessity imposed by the barbarism of the past — it is a responsibility to history. My country long ago introduced Holocaust education in our school system. France is also endeavouring to promote that priority in all European forums. It is doing so in the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research, which was set up following the Stockholm Declaration of January 2000. It did so at the OSCE conference in 2004 and took the initiative within the European Union to launch a dialogue among education ministers on the subject.

The international community has already taken a major legal step — which we welcome — in adopting the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. But it is also through teaching, regular contact with places of remembrance and education that we must awaken future generations. All over the world, such actions can help combat religious intolerance, racism, incitement to violence and discrimination. At the same time as the education of new generations is rooted in history, it involves the future of the world and mankind.

For that reason, it is necessary that, after solemnly marking the commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the Holocaust at the end of 2005, the United Nations should adopt the draft resolution before you today. The text salutes the designation by many States of 27 January as a Day of Commemoration and enshrines it as a day of international observance. It also has the great merit of calling upon States to build on this day of remembrance by working to educate future generations.

Today, the duty to remember requires us to be vigilant and calls on us to act. Remembrance can never be taken for granted, it is a duty that must be constantly renewed. It requires States to mobilize with all people of goodwill involved in education and the training of new generations. That is the meaning of our support for the draft resolution before the United Nations General Assembly today.

Mr. Ungureanu (Romania): Romania joins and fully supports the statement to be delivered by the representative of the United Kingdom on behalf of the European Union.

I wish to take the floor in my national capacity, as Romania experienced the Holocaust directly and has recently taken a series of steps to assume and come to terms with its own past.

I am proud to be able to inform the Assembly of the progress Romania has been able to achieve, after the obliterating experience of Communism, in regaining its whole historic memory, with both the good and the painful chapters. We have learned to accept and live with the latter.

The Holocaust, born out of a perverse philosophy of hatred, which later became a doctrine of death, symbolizes for us the greatest tragedy humankind has ever known. First and foremost, we need to remember and pay homage to those who perished in the Holocaust. We must not forget, for if we do, we may not be able to act effectively in response to our collective duty to prevent and make certain such horrors will never again happen.

My country's position on the Holocaust is firm, clear and committed. Romania has assumed a strong political commitment to develop Holocaust research programmes, education in the spirit of promoting democracy and tolerance and to combat anti-Semitism, conserve Jewish cultural heritage and commemorate the victims of this tragedy.

A notable step in that regard was the setting up of the International Commission on the Holocaust in Romania, chaired by the famous Nobel laureate, Professor Elie Wiesel. At the end of 2004 the Commission issued a report on the Holocaust in Romania — a true landmark for future studies and public debate on the Holocaust — and provided a set of recommendations that the Romanian Government has endorsed. This is remarkable progress in the country's efforts to acknowledge its past, including its darker aspects.

My Government is committed to fully observing the recommendations of the Commission and to ensuring the proper follow-up to its work. It has been decided to designate 9 October as National Holocaust Commemoration Day. That was the date in 1941 on which deportations of Romanian Jews to Transdniestria began. This year, we observed Holocaust Day for the second time in Romania.

Furthermore, in March 2002, as part of its comprehensive approach to fighting anti-Semitism, the

Romanian Government issued a Government emergency ordinance making unlawful any organizations and symbols of a fascist, racist or xenophobic character, as well as the promotion of the cult of persons guilty of crimes against peace and humanity.

The National Institute for Holocaust Studies in Romania was set up at the beginning of this month. It will be in charge of gathering and publishing documents on the Romanian Holocaust, as well as of promoting educational activities relating to the Holocaust. We can never dwell enough on the role of education and educational programmes in preventing anti-Semitic acts and other forms of intolerance that, during the Second World War, led eventually to the Holocaust.

We have a moral duty to strive harder to make future generations understand the dangers of systematic crimes against peoples and to turn the lessons of the past into the means to prevent discriminatory action from ever happening again. In Romania, an undergraduate-level textbook on Jewish history and the Holocaust was published at the beginning of this month. It is structured in accordance with the recommendations of the Wiesel Commission and will be introduced into the educational system so to ensure that Romanian students have proper knowledge about the Holocaust.

Centres for Hebrew studies have been inaugurated in several Romanian cities, including in my hometown, Iasi.

In December 2004, Romania became a full member of the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research, an organization that coordinates the efforts of its members for a better understanding of the Holocaust by promoting educational programmes on this issue — programmes to commemorate the victims, as well as research programmes. In this regard, we are fully determined to play a more active role and to initiate projects in cooperation with other Member States or liaison countries, including at the regional level.

Setting up an annual Holocaust remembrance day in memory of the victims is a way to make future generations understand that they should not forget the tragedies that ravaged twentieth-century Europe. This is also why, together with its European partners, Romania supports the draft resolution to establish such a day of remembrance.

I am persuaded that the step that will be taken today is of crucial importance for the constant remembrance and commemoration of the worst tragedy in humankind's history. As a historian, and as Minister for Foreign Affairs representing my country, I am honoured to be a part of this Day in the General Assembly.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Alexander Saltanov, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation.

Mr. Saltanov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): This year, which marks the sixtieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War, the issue of combating anti-Semitism and other forms of intolerance weighs heavily on our minds. Humankind recalls with indignation and sorrow the horrific Nazi atrocities, including the Holocaust. My country reveres the sacred memory of the Nazi victims, including 6 million Holocaust victims, half of them — 3 million — citizens. Current and future generations should know the causes of those horrendous crimes and fight anti-Semitism, intolerance, extremism and xenophobia in all their manifestations. We must also pay tribute to all of the soldiers who died for the liberation of Europe from fascism and saved from total annihilation not only the Jews but many other peoples.

For my country and, I hope, for all other countries, any attempts to glorify Nazi accomplices are absolutely outrageous — be they former legionaries of the Waffen-SS or other collaborators who annihilated hundreds and hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians, prisoners of war and prisoners in concentration camps. Humankind paid too dearly for underestimating the Nazi threat to turn a blind eye to any attempt to revive it 60 years after victory in the Second World War. Such attempts are on the rise, even to the extent that in some countries the day of liberation from the Nazis is proclaimed a day of mourning.

In this connection, the Russian Federation will introduce a draft resolution during this session of the General Assembly on the inadmissibility of certain practices that promote modern forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and the intolerance associated with them. We are certain that the adoption of that draft resolution by consensus will contribute to

the consolidation of international efforts to fight such ugly phenomena.

Today, our global civilization is confronting a new and terrible threat: international terrorists have taken up the baton from the SS butchers. The abhorrent ideology of terrorism has a lot in common with Naziism. We can effectively combat that twenty-first-century evil only through the united efforts of the international community. Xenophobia cannot be good and bad. We must, as a general rule, promptly and effectively repulse any manifestations of extremism of any kind — political, nationalistic or religious.

We must continue to work tirelessly at the national and intergovernmental levels if we are to overcome intolerance. We must adopt legal measures and develop dialogue and cooperation so as to disseminate ideas of tolerance among civilizations. The United Nations, as a universal Organization, is the most appropriate forum for such an effort. That is why Russia was one of the first countries to become a sponsor of the draft resolution before us.

Sir Emyr Jones Parry (United Kingdom): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and the 12 countries that have aligned themselves with this statement.

It is 60 years since the end of the Holocaust — one of the darkest chapters in Europe's history, encompassing the attempt to exterminate the Jews in Europe and the systematic massacre of other groups. Time has passed, but the painful memories have not faded nor can they be allowed to fade. In January, the European Union fully supported the special session of the General Assembly held to commemorate the liberation of the Nazi death camps. And throughout the European Union, from our veterans to our school children, we have remembered the victims and the survivors: the millions of Jews who were murdered and the others who were also singled out: the Roma, the physically and mentally disabled, homosexuals, political prisoners and prisoners of war.

Today, the international community is firmly resolved that future generations cannot be allowed to forget. The first challenge is to ensure that the Holocaust victims are properly commemorated. That is why the European Union supports a United Nations resolution to establish an annual day in memory of the victims of the Holocaust. It builds on the commitment that European Union member States and many others made in 2000 at the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust, which commemorated the victims and honoured those who stood against it. It also builds on the Council of Europe's declaration in 2002 of an annual Day of Remembrance of the Holocaust and for the Prevention of Crimes Against Humanity.

It is equally important that we draw lessons from the Holocaust. An international day of commemoration would also provide the opportunity to reflect regularly on how the international community is living up to its pledge of "never again". The international community must do all it can to prevent future acts of genocide. A Holocaust survivor, Rafael Lemkin, was a principal inspiration of the 1951 United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. But, tragically, the world still suffers from the evils of genocide and ethnic cleansing. Failure to prevent those crimes reflects a failure to learn from the horrors of the Holocaust.

We ignore history at our peril. The European Union therefore supports the aim of the draft resolution to foster ways of promoting Holocaust education. The Holocaust should be an integral part of national education curricula. Communities and non-governmental organizations should play their part too. There is no single blueprint for that, nor should there be. But the contribution to tolerance made by teaching and learning about the Holocaust is clear. The Task Force for International Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research, to which many European Union member States belong, is a particularly effective way of ensuring high standards in the way we teach about the Holocaust in our schools, universities and communities. We also support the draft resolution's request for the Secretary-General to establish a programme of outreach on the Holocaust and the United Nations and to mobilize civil society for Holocaust remembrance and education.

The significance of the Holocaust is universal. But it commands a place of special significance in European remembrance. It was in Europe that the Holocaust took place. And, like the United Nations, it is out of that dark episode that a new Europe was born. The member States of the European Union work together today to promote peace and democracy within the Union's borders and beyond. That is something that we could not have imagined 60 years ago. Yet, some members of our societies still face intolerance and prejudice. The best tribute we can pay to the victims

and the survivors of the Holocaust is to speak out against such attitudes in our communities. We all still have lessons to learn, and we therefore fully support the draft resolution.

Mr. Menon (Singapore): The Indian Ocean tsunami disaster in December last year claimed the lives of some 275,000 people from 35 different countries. Less than a year later, at least 50,000 lives were taken in South Asia by a 7.6-magnitude earthquake. Behind the numbers, each death is a tragic story of a human life suddenly taken, a family left behind to grieve the loss or, in many cases, a whole family wiped out in one fell swoop. The international community reacted in both cases with solidarity to help affected countries that needed external assistance. The fearsome power of natural disasters such as tsunamis and earthquakes to devastate entire areas in mere moments and exterminate entire communities sparked serious discussions on what the international community could and should do to save lives when such calamities occur.

Today, we meet in the General Assembly Hall to remember the many victims, not of an act of nature but of one of the worst and most cruel acts of evil inflicted by man upon mankind. Regrettably, other such shameful episodes had been committed previously and have been committed since then against peoples of other religions or ethnicities, although the acts committed were not executed in similar fashion. The key lesson that we, the peoples of the United Nations, should have learned from such episodes is never — truly never again — to allow genocides, ethnic cleansing or crimes against humanity to recur. Just as we condemn the frequent acts of terrorism that kill innocent people these days, we need, similarly, to recognize that there is no justification whatsoever for committing criminal acts such as the Holocaust and that it is important for us to prevent such crimes.

My delegation was therefore much encouraged that our leaders, at the recent High-level Plenary Meeting, recognized for the first time the responsibility of States to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, and their responsibility to act accordingly. The 2005 World Summit Outcome states that this responsibility entails the prevention of such crimes, including preventing their incitement, through appropriate and necessary means. It adds that the international community should, as appropriate, encourage and help States to exercise that responsibility and support the United Nations in establishing an early warning capability.

On this solemn occasion, we remember the victims and the survivors of the Holocaust. But the bigger picture goes beyond just Germany and the Jews. The cathartic actions that post-war Germany took, not the least of which was the acknowledgement with contrition of those events and the etching on the collective German memory of the wrongs that Nazi Germany had done to Jews and others, leave little doubt that German society as a whole has sincerely learned the lesson of history and has come to terms with it. And contrary to what some may contend, it is not a question of shaming, or holding responsible, future generations of Germans for their forefathers' actions. Rather, it is a question of a society programming a lesson learned into its collective memory lest it be doomed to repeat the history from which it has not learned.

My delegation would urge all societies that know of, or which have committed, similar wrongs in their past, whether in peace or in war, against peoples of other religions or ethnicities, to recognize the wrong that has been done and take active steps to come to terms with history and internalize those lessons in their collective memory. We would also submit that those lessons of history are instructive for all peoples. Learning from the mistakes of others that led them down the slippery slope of discrimination, envy, prejudice and hatred, we can avoid and work together to avert similar, inexcusable errors and crimes. In that regard, the advocacy of bigoted views, such as the denial of the right of a people or a State to exist, is highly dangerous and completely unacceptable in the modern age.

The Holocaust occurred partly because it had become fashionable in some quarters, using the leverage of the media for mass propaganda, to blame the people of one faith and descent, making them convenient scapegoats, for all sorts of problems that then existed. At the same time, while many did not agree with the Nazis, they felt cowed or, for some reason, chose to remain silent. That is why we cannot afford to be complacent. At the first sign of ethnic or religious defamation, we need to act promptly and warn strongly of the danger. We also need to actively promote greater understanding in order to dispel misconceptions about others who are not like us but

whose presence in this globalized world we can no longer afford to ignore. It is all too natural that we tend to prefer other people to be like ourselves and share our way of life, our outlook and our values. So, when a minority differs from the majority, all too often, in the name of integration, which is held up as an existential raison d'être, the majority expects the minority to become more like them and conform to their socio-cultural norms. The minority is subjected to a process of assimilation and, in extremis, forced to accept the imposition of the majority's system of values and beliefs.

Even though the underlying intention may be entirely noble — for example, so that they might enjoy access to work, education, justice or political participation, all conducted in the ways of the majority — it is certainly misplaced. A wiser approach would be to work out a modus vivendi to accommodate the minority and to live with one another. It is a huge affront to one's dignity to be regarded as having no values or to be urged to jettison one's system of values, beliefs and way of life as being inferior or wrong in favour of another system. Members of the majority should always ask themselves how they would feel if the tables were turned and they were in the shoes of the minority. It is not for nothing that great and wise men of the past have counselled us not to do unto others what we do not want others to do unto ourselves.

Indeed, the ingredients that foster misunderstanding and hatred remain prevalent in the world today. It is striking to my delegation how little, even in this global age of information, some of us understand about others, even those living just across our borders or amongst us, who are of a different race, ethnicity, culture or creed. Ignorance breeds suspicions and phobias. The tendency of modern mass media to generalize, caricaturize and sensationalize in order to sell news does not help matters. Stereotyping contributes to the wrongful entrenching of baseless fears and the misprofiling of cultural and religious beliefs and practices. We owe it to ourselves and to our posterity to urgently educate ourselves about others.

That is the very rationale underlying the repeated calls for a dialogue among civilizations. And what better dialogue can we have than for all the movers and shakers and force multipliers of global information, in particular the mass media of all stripes, to get their basic understanding of all major cultures and religions right so that they can put out information in a more objective manner? My delegation would submit that the greater influence one has, especially the mass media, the greater is one's special responsibility and role to promote understanding and avoid unwittingly fanning the flames of fear and prejudice that may seed the next conflict along the fault lines of race, culture, faith or civilization. We cannot be complacent and need to work at preserving the harmony that underpins the fabric and foundations of our global society.

Singapore is a small, multiracial, multireligious city-State. Singaporeans do not share a common cultural heritage, but we have nevertheless managed to live and work together harmoniously for 40 years since independence. That is because we recognize our diversity and the value of cooperation and harmony. Our Chinese, Malay, Indian, Eurasian, Arab, Jewish and other communities draw on our traditional cultures to build a common future through mutual understanding, tolerance and accommodation. However, that has not lulled us into complacency. Countries with a multiethnic population and longer histories have broken up because of ethnic conflicts. We realize from our own past, and from more recent experiences of racial and religious strife elsewhere involving physical assaults and attacks on places of worship, how vulnerable our own social fabric is. We take care to ensure that there is justice and equality regardless of race, language or religion, and we do not and will not condone any acts that stir up strife along racial or religious lines. As my Foreign Minister said at the 20th meeting, in his statement during the general debate:

> "Tribalism is a basic human instinct. We may proclaim that all men are brothers, but we reflexively distinguish degrees of closeness. Divisions of race, language, culture and religion run deep in human society and surface under stress."

Beyond taking a cautious approach, we have decided to celebrate our diversity in our daily life — to turn what may seem an adversity into opportunity. We encourage all Singaporeans to see the inherent value of diversity. As the world moves from globalization towards "glocalization" or global localization, our unique knowledge of cultural software, which has enabled us to network easily with both East and West, Europe, America, China, India and the Middle East, can command a premium when people realize that Singaporeans, as intermediaries, can make a huge

difference to their business success by fostering better understanding and trust, as well as interpreting and explaining how each distinct culture works. In our own small ways, at the international level, such as at the United Nations, we hope also to contribute to greater understanding of the vital need for tolerance and dialogue towards building a better and more stable world for our children.

Mr. Bolton (United States of America): The United States is proud to co-sponsor this important draft resolution, and I am pleased to be here to speak for it.

It is appropriate that, on the sixtieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, we come together in support of a draft resolution to commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of the Holocaust and to honour and remember its victims. It is appropriate because the United Nations as an institution was built upon the ashes of the Holocaust and the Second World War with an important mission. That mission is to help ensure that the international community will never again allow such a crime against humanity to be committed — never again allow the world to be plunged into such violence and chaos.

The greatest tribute we can pay to the Holocaust's millions of victims, of whom by far the greatest number were the six million Jews — one third of the Jewish people — who were robbed of their lives in Nazi death camps, is to ensure that we never forget them or their sacrifice. We must do everything we can so that future generations in perpetuity will know of that great crime and learn its important lessons.

While the Holocaust occurred 60 years ago, its lessons are no less relevant today. When a President or a Member State can brazenly and hatefully call for a second Holocaust by suggesting that Israel, the Jewish homeland, should be wiped off the map, it is clear that not all have learned the lessons of the Holocaust and that much work remains to be done. And when some Member States shamefully hesitate to decisively condemn such remarks, it is clear that much work remains to be done.

That is why the draft resolution before us today is so important. Among its measures, it will designate 27 January of each year as an international day of commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust, call for the Secretary-General to establish a programme of Holocaust outreach, and urge Member States to put into place educational programmes to teach future generations the lessons of the Holocaust so as to prevent future acts of genocide.

The programme will complement the work already undertaken by the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance, and Research, a group of 20 countries that has been working with Governments, non-governmental organizations and civil society to introduce into school curriculums material about the Holocaust and the devastation that can result when hatred is allowed to spread and is even encouraged by rogue Governments. Other international organizations, such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, are emphasizing education, legislation and law enforcement as the measures that will contain and eventually eliminate racial and religious hatred.

The draft resolution is the most fitting tribute we can pay in memory of the victims of the Holocaust, and reflects the core values and principles upon which the United Nations was founded. I hope it will be adopted with unanimous support.

Mr. Southcott (Australia): I have the honour to speak today on behalf of Australia, New Zealand and Canada. It has now been 60 years since the world saw the defeat of a barbaric and tyrannical Nazi regime that had been bent on the systematic eradication of the Jewish people and the violent repression of many others.

Canada, Australia and New Zealand consider the genocide perpetrated against the Jewish people during the Holocaust to have been the most abhorrent of crimes. It cost millions their lives and caused untold damage and destruction to the lives of many millions more. Its effects have been profound on a number of generations and continue to be felt today. Our deep sense of loss and sorrow is not only for the many victims and their families, but also for the vitality and talents lost to the world as a whole.

Canada, Australia and New Zealand have been dismayed by recent signs of increased anti-Semitism, Holocaust denial, racism and religious intolerance, none of which is acceptable in any form, in any place. The Holocaust showed the depths to which humanity can descend and made clear the devastating consequences of anti-Semitism, racism and persecution.

Canada, Australia and New Zealand commend the draft resolution before us as an important step by the United Nations to ensure that Holocaust remembrance and education remain a priority for all countries, and it serves as a strong reminder to us all of the need to remain vigilant and take steps to prevent such horror from happening again.

Mr. Towpik (Poland): Poland welcomes and cosponsors the draft resolution on Holocaust remembrance. Our reasons therefor have been well presented in the statement made by the United Kingdom Ambassador on behalf of the European Union. I fully associate myself with that statement. Let me, however, add a few additional remarks.

The Second World War brought terrifying atrocities and destruction to many nations. Millions of Poles and Russians, British and Americans, Ukrainians and Belarusstians, and members of other nations sacrificed their lives in defending their countries and fighting for liberty. Millions of soldiers and civilians perished in battles, prisons, mass executions and concentration camps.

The Second World War also brought one of the most horrible experiences in human history, which we define today by the term Holocaust. It was an attempt to eliminate an entire nation; an attempt based on racial and religious prejudices; an attempt which led to the creation of a whole system for exterminating people, a system that included not only racist and criminal ideology, but also a horrifying machinery — an entire infrastructure — to implement that ideology: concentration camps and centres of extermination. It resulted in the planned and carefully executed murder of one third of the Jewish population, along with that of countless members of other minorities.

We welcome the proposed draft resolution as a gesture commemorating the victims of the Holocaust. It is of particular importance to us Poles. Poland lost millions — over 90 per cent — of its Jewish citizens. The Holocaust put an end to a certain era in our history — an end to the world created by Poles and Jews coexisting on Polish territory. The relationship between those two nations was not free from prejudices, frequently painful ones indeed. However, it was in Poland that the Jewish community was able to enjoy a climate of freedom and tolerance for 800 years. It was in Poland that many Jews found shelter and escaped the discrimination and persecution to which they had been subject in other parts of the world. In return for that, many generations of Jews contributed to the creation of a unique spiritual, cultural and economic heritage that Poland takes pride in having. Their great contribution will be illustrated in the museum of Polish Jewish history that is currently being built in Warsaw.

With the draft resolution before us, we also pay tribute to those who stood against the crime of genocide and who helped its victims. We pay tribute to those who fought in Jewish ghettos and those who, risking their own lives, tried to assist Jews. Those people have been honoured with the distinction "the righteous among nations". To us, they are a role model, an inspiration for our younger generations. They remind us that evil can and should be opposed. We are proud that, among the 20,000 decorated with that distinction, 6,000 are Poles.

The draft resolution also rightly emphasizes that it is important to continue educating on the history of the Holocaust, which is the best demonstration of what ethnic and religious hatred can lead to. It is a tragic warning against any system that is based on ethnic and religious intolerance.

Poland will spare no effort to ensure the lasting preservation of the remnants of the Nazi concentration camps and extermination centres that were located in Poland by the German occupiers. They should remain places that are open to the world, where historic reflection and education can take place in the spirit of democracy and tolerance.

It is our duty to shape the awareness of young generations in a spirit of tolerance, respect for human rights and sensitivity to any manifestation of discrimination. That goal can be implemented through educational programmes, such as those planned at the International Centre of Education About Auschwitz and the Holocaust and the Institute of Peace and Reconciliation, which will study contemporary acts of genocide. Poland has also developed youth exchange programmes, which are the best form of active dialogue to combat stereotypes by confronting it with personal experience and person-to-person contact. An example of such a programme is the annual March of the Living, in which Jewish and Polish youth participate, organized by the Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum.

Finally, the draft resolution reminds us that the main lesson that should be drawn from the terrible experience of the Holocaust is that we should not allow a similar tragedy to happen again against any nation. The generation that has witnessed the horrors of the Holocaust is slowly passing away. Now it is our responsibility and the responsibility of the Organization to remember, to remind and to warn.

Mr. Pleuger (Germany): First of all, I would like to express my full support for the statement presented by the British Ambassador on behalf of the presidency of the European Union.

For my country, the commemoration of the millions of victims of the Holocaust means remembering not only one of the darkest chapters in Europe's history, but remembering the very darkest chapter in the history of Germany. Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, when speaking in April 2005 at the sixtieth anniversary of the liberation of the concentration camp of Buchenwald, emphasized the unwavering commitment to democracy and human rights originating in the terrible experiences of the past in saying:

> "The Europe of freedom, peace and democracy that we have created over the past 50 years certainly has many roots, but the deepest roots of all are embedded in the darkest years of the twentieth century — the years when the silent terror of the camps held this very Europe in its grip.... From these camps came the most insistent appeal to oppose the forces of injustice and tyranny in whatever guise they may take."

At a time when the last personal witnesses of the Holocaust are leaving us, it is especially important to find new ways to keep the fate of the victims alive in the memory of the world and to keep on asking how such crimes could ever be committed. Every generation has to define its own answer to that question. It is our responsibility to keep continuous guard against anti-semitism, racism and any form of political, religious or otherwise motivated and disguised intolerance.

As members of the generations living after the Holocaust, we know that genocide is not solely about the mass murder of human beings. Indeed, we know that the roots of genocide may be found in words, in political concepts, in the denial of human, civil and political rights to certain groups of people, or in the dehumanizing of political adversaries, the preaching of hatred and the call for the annihilation of peoples or States. Only by remembering and by defending the human rights and dignity of each and every person in this world may we be saved from having to witness repetitions of history.

It is very fitting that we are discussing this issue here at the heart of the United Nations in the General Assembly, because the United Nations was founded in particular in order to prevent genocide and to defend the human rights of each and every one of us.

Germany, in close cooperation with its friends and partners in Europe, has been and is deeply committed to the strengthening of the United Nations, which is at the centre of the global struggle for human rights and human dignity. Remembering the Holocaust is part of that struggle, and that is why Germany fully supports and co-sponsors the draft resolution before us.

Programme of work

The President: I would like to inform members that on Thursday, 3 November 2005, the General Assembly will take up agenda item 41, "Culture of peace", as the last item, under which action will be taken on draft resolutions A/60/L.4/Rev.1 and A/60/L.10.

The meeting rose at 5.35 p.m.